



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

T-12-06
For Immediate Release
Monday, April 10, 2006

Contact: Angela Blanchette
510.540.3732
Ron Baker
916.324.3142

DTSC certifies environmental cleanup of three NASA Ames sites

Berkeley – The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) today announced certification of the hazardous substances cleanup of three sites at the NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) Ames Research Center at Moffett Field near Mountain View. The Center, which employs more than 4,000 personnel and has thousands of visitors annually, plays a critical role in virtually all NASA missions in support of America's space and aeronautics programs. DTSC certification of the three NASA Ames sites, called Area of Investigation (AOI) 4, 8 and 10, signifies that all environmental cleanup activities mandated by the department are now complete.

"These actions clearly signal that we are making significant progress in addressing environmental contamination at NASA Ames, and making it a safer place for the many employees and visitors at the facility," said DTSC Director Maureen Gorsen. "Our certification of the cleanup in the three areas is also consistent with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's environmental action plan to protect the state's groundwater, surface waters and coastline from industrial and agricultural pollution, sewage, storm water pollution, nonpoint source runoff and other sources of contaminants." Gorsen added.

In 1995 and 1996, DTSC entered into a Voluntary Cleanup Agreement with NASA Ames to provide oversight for environmental cleanup of the three areas. NASA Ames funded all cleanup costs for the DTSC-certified sites, estimated to be \$440,000. DTSC certification documents for the sites can be viewed on the department's website at www.dtsc.ca.gov

The following are summaries of the NASA Ames AOI sites certified by DTSC:

- AOI 10 consists of three electrical substations, vital for supplying power to various wind tunnels at NASA Ames Research Center. Soil at AOI 10 was analyzed and found to contain elevated levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and petroleum hydrocarbons (TPHs). The source of this contamination is believed to be transformer oil containing PCBs, as they were historically used in electrical transformers at substations. Cleanup activities at the 1.2-acre site consisted of excavating approximately 45 cubic yards of PCB- and TPH-contaminated soil and disposing it off-site, at a permitted landfill. The AOI 10 site received an unrestricted land use certification from DTSC, the department's most conservative assessment.

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- AOI 8 is known as Navarro Farms and located in the northwest corner of NASA Ames, adjacent to the tidal marshland portion of the facility. The site is currently used for recycling and storage of various materials, vehicles, and equipment used at NASA Ames, and was formerly used as farmland to grow and package agricultural goods. Soil and groundwater at the 6.3-acre site were found to be contaminated with elevated levels of TPHs. Approximately 337 cubic yards of soil contaminated with elevated levels of TPHs was excavated and disposed of at a permitted, offsite landfill. Another 1,167 cubic yards of excavated soil with lower levels of TPHs was analyzed for reuse as backfill or bioremediated prior to reuse onsite. Quarterly groundwater monitoring will be conducted to ensure TPH concentrations do not increase. DTSC certified the AOI 8 site with a land use restriction that allows only industrial or commercial uses of the site.
- AOI 4 consists of the National Full Scale Aerodynamics Complex, a large wind tunnel used for testing the aerodynamic characteristics of large-scale models. The complex includes two underground fuel storage tanks, which were leaking and subsequently removed. Soil and groundwater samples taken from the 12.6-acre site initially detected elevated levels of petroleum hydrocarbons (TPHs) and trichloroethylene (TCE). Further sampling showed that TPH contamination levels had attenuated, and no soil excavation was necessary. Therefore, quarterly groundwater monitoring is being required to ensure TPH concentrations do not increase. The TCE contamination in the groundwater is being addressed by the U.S.EPA as part of its oversight of federal Superfund sites adjacent to NASA Ames. DTSC certified the AOI 4 site with a land use restriction that allows only industrial or commercial uses of the site.

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The Department of Toxic Substances Control's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.